

**Farming
Advice Service**

Welcome to the Farming Advice Service (FAS) newsletter

*Thank you for continuing to subscribe
to our monthly newsletter.*

*We hope you find the content useful
and we welcome any feedback
or suggestions on topics you would
like to see covered in future editions.*

Contact us

FAS technical advice line: 03000 200 301

advice@farmingadvice.org.uk

farmingadvice.org.uk

*You can view a text-only version of the June
Newsletter by [clicking this link](#).*

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Key dates to be aware of...

- 1 July** New hedgerow management rules came into force in May 2024. As part of this, the [hedgerow management rules on buffer strips](#) will apply from **1 July 2024**.
- 31 August** New hedgerow management rules came into force in May 2024. As part of this, the [hedgerow management rules on cutting and trimming](#) announced that hedgerows covered by the rules must not be cut or trimmed until after **31 August 2024**.

In case you missed them...

- 1 June–1 July** If you missed the deadline for submitting your 2024 [Countryside Stewardship or Environmental Stewardship claim](#) without reduction (15 May 2024), you can still submit a claim between 1 June and 1 July with a 10% reduction applied to claim value. You still have until **11.59pm on Wednesday 2 September 2024** to submit a claim, but the later you submit it, the greater the reduction.

For more details about the information provided in the key dates table, visit the [Rules for Farmers and Land Managers](#) and the relevant pages of GOV.UK.

Pre-election period

Please be aware that due to the General Election happening on 4 July, Civil Services, such as the Rural Payments Agency and Defra will be limiting the amount of communications they publish. Business as usual activities will still be ongoing and the Rural Payments Agency will still be attending some farm shows over the summer where they will be able to listen to your queries.

The usual schedule of engagement (attending and hosting events, publishing and responding to comments) will resume once the pre-election period ends.

Upcoming grant deadlines

- 10 July** The deadline to check, sign and return the form sent to you by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) to receive grant funding through the [Farming Recovery Fund 2024](#) is **10 July 2024**.

In case you missed them...

From 3 January the following grants opened for applications:

- [Capital Grants 2024](#)
- [Higher Tier Capital Grants 2024](#)
- [Protection and Infrastructure Grants 2024](#)
- [Woodland Management Plan \(WMP\) Grants 2024](#)
- [Woodland Tree Health \(WTH\) Grants 2024](#)
- [Implementation Plan Grant \(PA1\) or Feasibility Study Grant \(PA2\)](#)

**Farming
Advice Service**

How can we help you?

Free and confidential advice

The FAS is funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). We provide **free, confidential advice** to help farmers and land managers in England understand and meet the legal requirements in English law around certain farming activities to protect people, livestock and the environment. We update the farming sector on relevant government farming policy that is applicable in England and on the actions that can be taken to help farmers comply with the relevant regulations. Our newsletter also provides articles on topics that are complementary to Farming Regulation, such as practices that benefit the wider environment and wellbeing support.

[Our website](#) hosts our previous newsletters, as well as technical articles and webinars that cover various topics in more detail.

Contacting the advice line

Farmers requiring telephone advice can contact the **FAS technical advice line on 03000 200 301**, Monday to Friday, between **08:30** and **17:00**. The Rural Services Helpline provides a single number for all **FAS, Rural Payments Agency (RPA), Animal and Plant Health Agency, Natural England** and **forestry** enquiries.

You can also email enquiries to advice@farmingadvice.org.uk. Our helpline team aims to respond to all telephone and email enquiries within one working day.

The advice given to individual farmers is **confidential** – we do not disclose any personal or individual information or data obtained during advisory activities.

You can also now speak to our Helpline team through the new online chat function on the farmingadvice.org.uk website.



Watch our webinar recordings and listen to our podcasts

If you missed any of our previous webinar sessions, you can find them on the FAS website, which features the below webinars:

- [Integrated Pest Management with Richard Heady of Heady's Farm](#)
- [Understanding soil biology for soil health and productive agriculture, with Dr Felicity Crotty](#)



You can also listen to previous webinars as podcasts through the [FAS website](#) and Spotify, Audible, Apple Podcasts and Google Podcasts.

Talking Manure – Are You Wasting Money? Achieving Business and Environmental gain through Nutrient Management Planning



Join CSF for a **FREE**, in person workshop on the use and benefits of Nutrient Management Planning on your farm

A light buffet and refreshments will be provided. BASIS & NRoSO points will be available. Please register for one event only.

CSF Nutrient Management Plan Workshop New Forest

10:15–13:00 – Friday July 12, 2024
Minstead Lodge, Seaman's Lane,
Minstead, SO43 7FT

Click [here](#) to sign up for tickets

CSF Nutrient Management Plan Workshop Newbury

10:15–13:00 – Monday July 22, 2024
Newbury Rugby Football Club,
Monks Lane, Newbury, RG14 7RW

Click [here](#) to sign up for tickets

Farm Safety Week 2024 22–26 July



This year's Farm Safety Week takes place from 22 to 26 July. Farm Safety Week, which is managed and funded by the Farm Safety Foundation ([Yellow Wellies](https://www.yellowwellies.org)), is an important event in the farming calendar. It is supported by more than 400 partners including the farming unions, agricultural businesses and organisations from the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

This year is special for the Farm Safety Foundation as it marks 10 years since the charity was set up by rural insurer NFU Mutual with the goal of raising awareness of, and challenging attitudes to, farm safety and poor mental health in the industry.

Over the past decade, the Yellow Wellies team have been delivering an ambitious education programme, conducting important research and mounting awareness campaigns – Farm Safety Week and Mind Your Head – all with the goal of equipping the farmers of tomorrow with the skills and knowledge to live well and farm well.

This year's Farm Safety Week will again highlight some of the key challenges farmers and farm workers face every day, and will throw a spotlight on the dangers of ignoring near misses while highlighting how every near miss can be an opportunity to improve working practices. The campaign will introduce

audiences to incredible individuals who are using their own personal experiences to encourage others to stay alert to the hazards on farm, and offer practical guidance on how to make farming jobs safer for everyone involved.

The [Yellow Wellies website](https://www.yellowwellies.org) also hosts various free resources to support farmers:

- [Build Your Own Health and Safety Policy digital tool](#)
- [Farm Emergency Plan](#)
- [Little Book of Minding Your Head](#)
- Little Book of Farm Safety – this new resource will be launched during Farm Safety week.

To learn more follow @yellowwelliesUK on Instagram, Facebook and X or search using the hashtag #FarmSafetyWeek

Hedgerow management rules: cutting and trimming – exemptions when sowing oilseed rape or temporary grass in August

Farmers/land managers need to notify the RPA each year before they can [cut or trim a hedgerow in August to sow oilseed rape or temporary grassland](#) during the same August.

Records must be kept of all works that you carry out under an exemption. If you are visited by the RPA you must be able to prove how and why you relied on the exemption.

Cutting or trimming is only permitted on:

- the in-field side of the hedgerow (and the top of the hedgerow if it's not possible to cut it from an adjoining field)
- the length of the hedgerow next to where you will sow the oilseed rape or temporary grass

To notify, you must [email or write to the RPA](#).

The RPA requests that the below information is submitted:

- details of the crop to be sown
- all relevant land parcel numbers
- use the subject heading 'Hedgerow management cutting and trimming rules notification'

You do not need to wait for written permission before carrying out any work. As long as you meet the rules of this provision, you only need to make sure your notification is received by the RPA. You should make sure therefore that you receive an acknowledgement of your notification from the RPA before carrying out any work. For email notifications this will be the automated RPA acknowledgement.



LEAF Open Farm Sunday: Bringing farming to the fore

On Sunday 9 June, more than 225 farms across Britain opened their gates to the public as part of the 18th [Open Farm Sunday](#) (OFS) managed by LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming). The event was promoted all over the media including on BBC Radio 2 and over 40 local and regional radio stations to highlight the work farmers do, to encourage visitors to discover the farming stories on their doorstep, and to showcase the sector to attract new entrants.

New research commissioned by LEAF ahead of OFS 2024 indicates that while most of the public (94%) think the work that farmers do is important, only 12% of the UK claim to be well informed about what farmers do for the countryside.

Annabel Shackleton, OFS Manager, outlined that *“People have a healthy appetite to learn more about what farmers do in terms of land management, nature protection, environmental stewardship and food production. The most powerful voices to share their knowledge and experiences are those of farmers themselves and this year’s OFS activities have proved just that.”*

The event saw hundreds of thousands of visitors visit farms to learn more about what it means to be a farmer. Visitor feedback highlights how much the public value the opportunity to get a sneak peak behind the farm gates and build relationships with farmers.

- *“I did not know what to expect from the open day but it certainly wasn’t the care, compassion, and hands-on learning that we received. I felt part of the team and, honestly, as a middle-aged man I never imagined I would feel as emotional a connection with the animals, the farm and the countryside as I did. I didn’t want to go home and the wife is keen to return and volunteer to help at lambing time. It was quite the most wonderful day out that I have had in a long time.”*
- *“A brilliant event with so much to see and do. We knew how hard farmers work but it really opened our eyes to the diversity of things they need to consider and how reactive they need to be to the weather and their animals. Such an incredible group of people.”*
- *“My youngest son wants to be a dairy farmer and has had an excellent day, calling it the best day ever!”*

Next year’s OFS will take place on 8 June 2025 and you can register to host an event at www.farmsunday.org.



Trees on farms

Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) – warning issued ahead of new hatching season

Farmers and landowners are being urged to look out for and report sightings of OPM caterpillars, a tree pest which can damage oak trees leaving them susceptible to disease and are also a hazard to human and animal health.

The caterpillars are predominantly found in South East England. They are easily identified as they descend down oak trees in a head-to-tail processionary form. They feed on the leaves as they migrate. This causes the leaves to sometimes drop off, which negatively impacts the tree's growth.

The warning has been issued by the Forestry Commission who are urging farmers and landowners to check their oak trees and report any sightings via the [TreeAlert portal](#) or by email to opm@forestrycommission.gov.uk.

OPM was first identified in London in 2006 after being accidentally transported over from Europe in trees for planting. It has since spread to surrounding counties in the South East, and last July a small outbreak of the caterpillars were found at a site in Derby previously designated free from the pest.

OPM caterpillars and their nests, which are made of distinctive white silken webbing, contain hairs that can cause itchy rashes and eye and throat irritation. **They should not be touched under any circumstances.** The nests can be found in the trunk or branches of oak trees, and fade to a light brown over time. Landowners are urged never to try and dispose of the nests themselves.

For more information on OPM, visit [Managing Oak Processionary Moth in England](#). You can also view a document outlining species commonly confused with OPM by [visiting this page](#).

Join the Forestry Commission to help keep our trees and the countryside healthy – report any suspected tree pest and diseases via the TreeAlert Portal

Help the Forestry Commission by reporting suspected findings of tree pests and diseases using their [TreeAlert online portal](#). This tool allows you to quickly report any signs of concern seen on trees on your land.

Biosecurity is crucial to prevent the introduction and spread of harmful organisms that threaten our natural spaces. These include non-native tree pests, such as insects, and disease-causing organisms, called pathogens, such as some bacteria and fungi.

There has been a significant increase in the number of non-native tree pests and diseases being introduced to the United Kingdom since the early 2000s. This demonstrates the need for us all to take action to provide our trees, woods and forests with greater protection. By implementing appropriate biosecurity measures, we can significantly reduce the risk of introducing and spreading tree pests and diseases.

A recent Forest Research questionnaire found that only **28% of respondents had reported unhealthy looking plants or trees due to pests or disease.**

The Forestry Commission is currently promoting a campaign to '#KeepItClean' on how we can all take action against tree pests and diseases. The campaign provides guidance on specific pests in the UK, as well as practical

biosecurity tips to help prevent the potential spread of pests and disease in our countryside.

Remember, you can use the [TreeAlert](#) online portal to report pests and diseases if you spot an unhealthy looking tree on your land.

England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) Checker Tool update

The England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) Checker Tool, which can assist you in estimating the potential income earned from planting woodland, has now been updated on the [Land App](#).

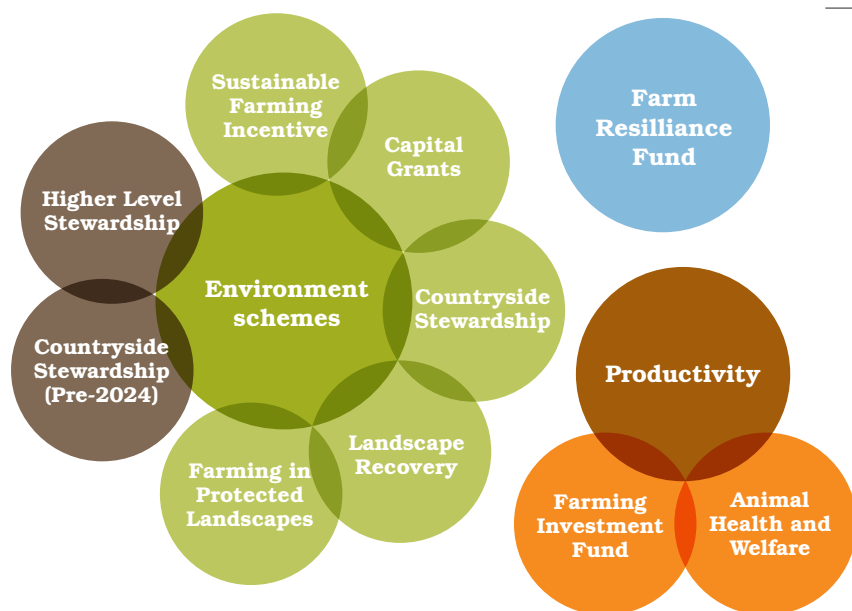
Defra has been supporting the Land App to update their EWCO Checker Tool to reflect new and increased payment rates.

To find out more and what you are eligible to receive, please check the EWCO section of the [Land App here](#).

Latest SFI opportunities for farmers

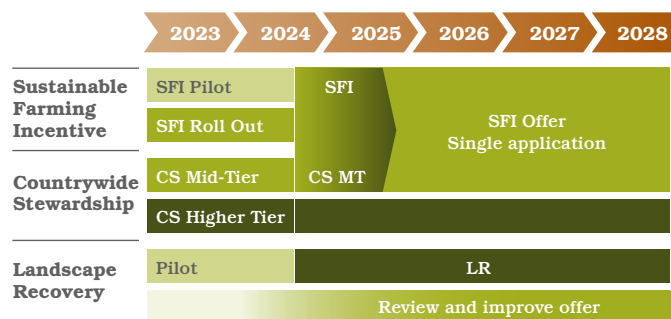
The Defra announcement of the latest Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) offer in May released details of the expanded scheme, including the intention to open the next round of applications in late July.

Claire Robinson – Senior Countryside Adviser at the National Farmers Union – shares a break-down of where this fits within current Government schemes and the Agricultural Transition timeline.



Details of the range of Government funding options available to farmers, growers and land managers can be found on the centralised GOV.UK pages [Funding for farmers, growers and land managers](#).

Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier options have been incorporated into the SFI as actions, whilst Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier and Landscape Recovery continue as separate schemes.



| SFI action | No. of actions |
|--|----------------|
| Agroforestry | 2 |
| Boundary features | 5 |
| Buffer strips | 8 |
| Farmland wildlife on arable and horticultural land | 15 |
| Farmland wildlife and habitats on grassland | 11 |
| Heritage | 5 |
| Integrated Pest Management | 4 |
| Moorland | 11 |
| Nutrient management | 3 |
| Organic farming | 14 |
| Precision farming | 4 |
| Species recovery and management | 4 |
| Soil health | 7 |
| Waterbodies | 9 |
| Total | 102 |
| Additional payments | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SFI management payment Common land additional payment | |

Defra announced that the following SFI actions will be available from July:

- Two of the existing 23 SFI actions are merged
- 23 new actions, including on precision farming, moorland, flood and water management, agroforestry and no till
- 57 improved versions of actions previously offered through CS Mid Tier
- Eight actions require a five-year commitment
- One will need endorsement, with more endorsed options to follow
- 10 actions are restricted to 25% of the farm
- Premium payments are included
- More technical actions will be in Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Further details can be found in the Defra Farming blog post [‘This year’s Sustainable Farming Incentive Offer’](#), including how to [complete an expression of interest with the RPA](#) to participate in the scheme before it opens fully, and on the GOV.UK pages [Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme: expanded offer for 2024](#).

Initial details on the Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier offer can be found here – [Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

Water management

2024/25 Time Limited Abstraction Licence renewals

The Environment Agency (EA) has confirmed that there are currently over 1,000 time-limited licences due to expire in the next 12 months. Applications to renew a licence must be made three months before the expiry date of your existing licence, or licence conditions. The EA is recommending that you send your renewal application to them by **30 September 2024** or sooner to ensure there is enough time to process applications before the current licences expires.

How to apply to renew your licence with exactly the same terms

Please complete [this online form](#) for each licence.

How to apply to renew your licence with different terms

If you want to change any of the terms of your current licence, you need to submit a new licence application form. The application forms can be found on [GOV.UK](#).

How to contact the EA

To discuss any changes you would like to make please call the EA on 03708 506 506.

Integrated Permitting Service
Environment Agency
Quadrant 2
Parkway Avenue
Sheffield
S9 4WF

New validation process for National Permitting Service

The EA's National Permitting Service (NPS) has put in place a revised process for dealing with more complex permit applications.

Once the application and fee and any supporting information have been received, the application is considered to be 'duly made' or 'technically valid'. Previously, an application might have been in a queue some time before being allocated to a permitting officer for these checks.

Under the new 'validation' process applications will initially be assessed by an experienced permitting officer soon after being submitted. If further information is required the EA will ask for this to be submitted within ten working days. If this cannot be provided the application will be returned.

This change, which commenced on 3 June, will mean:

- applicants will hear from the EA sooner
- where further information in support of an application is required, requests for this to be supplied will be made much sooner than would be the case under the previous process
- applications that need further revision will still be handled by the Validation Officer, so will be reassessed more quickly

Applicants will be contacted sooner and will know earlier if their application is valid or requires further work.

Application 'validation' and determination stages may be handled by different officers.

The EA expects the time between validation and allocation for determination will reduce over time.

More information on the permitting process is available on gov.uk:

- [Waste: environmental permits](#)
- [A1 installations: environmental permits](#)
- [Water Abstraction or impounding licences](#)

Applicants can continue to seek free and chargeable pre-application advice to ensure their application is of good quality and ready to be submitted:

- [Get advice before you apply for an environmental permit](#)
- [Get advice before you apply for a water abstraction or impounding licence](#)

Updates from the Farming blog and industry announcements

Defra regularly updates the [Farming blog](#). Please [subscribe to the blog](#) to ensure that you receive all the latest news.

SFI 2023 – annual declarations and application update

If you have an SFI 2023 agreement, the RPA will email you to ask you to submit your annual declaration.

Annual declarations are submitted during the last two months of each agreement year. This is called the annual 'declaration period'.

For example, those with agreements starting in October 2023 will be asked to submit their declaration in August and September 2024. Those with agreements starting in November 2023 will be asked to submit their declaration in September and October 2024.

You'll submit your annual declaration online in the Rural Payments service. Find out what you must do to get paid for your SFI agreement, how the RPA will calculate your payment, when you'll be paid and how to submit an annual declaration: [Getting paid for your SFI agreement](#).

Latest bluetongue update: increased risk of virus transmission

The UK's Chief Veterinary Officer has urged farmers to remain vigilant for bluetongue virus.

Bluetongue virus is primarily transmitted by biting midges (Culicoides species) and affects cattle, sheep, and other ruminants such as goats and deer, and camelids such as llamas and alpacas. The virus does not affect people or food safety.

There is no evidence that bluetongue virus is circulating in the UK. **However, given the increase in temperature, there is now an increased risk and in the event of an incursion of bluetongue virus from the continent, onward transmission is now possible.**

Biting midge activity increased with the warmer Spring weather, and there remains a very high probability of a [new introduction of bluetongue virus](#) serotype 3 (BTV-3) into livestock in Great Britain in 2024 through infected biting midges being blown over

from northern Europe.

Farms close to the coast in counties along the east coast of England from Norfolk to Kent and along the south coast from Kent to Devon are at highest risk of incursion. Biting midges are most active between April and November and the timing of a potential incursion will depend on the temperature and wind patterns.

Farmers should continue to monitor their animals frequently for clinical signs and make sure their animals and land are registered with APHA so animals can be located in the event of an outbreak.

Visit gov.uk/bluetongue for more guidance and the latest updates on bluetongue virus.



Updates from the Farming blog and industry announcements

Support is now available for tackling endemic diseases

[New support](#) is available to tackle endemic diseases for keepers of beef cattle, pigs and sheep. As part of the Annual Health and Welfare Review this support provides livestock keepers with access to testing, as well as advice on how to remove disease from their farm and improve biosecurity.

The payment rates for this support vary by species:

- £215 for beef cattle with no BVD
- £837 for beef cattle where BVD is present in the herd
- £639 for sheep
- £923 for pigs

This support is not yet available to keepers of dairy cattle. The availability will be communicated to dairy keepers in due course.

Apply for funding on GOV.UK: [Get funding to improve animal health and welfare](#).

Grants for Laying Hen Housing are now open

Applications for the Laying Hen Housing for Health and Welfare grant are now open. You can apply if you are a laying hen or pullet farmer with flocks of more than 1,000 birds.

You can get funding for two different types of projects:

- £5,000 to £100,000 available towards installing a new veranda on an existing building
- £15,000 to £500,000 available towards refurbishing or replacing existing laying hen and pullet housing

Applications will close at **23:59 on 18 September 2024**.

Read the full guidance on [GOV.UK](#).

RPA attendance at farm shows, summer 2024

Due to the pre-election period, communications from Defra and the Rural Payments Agency are currently limited. However, business as usual activities are still ongoing and the Rural Payments Agency will still be attending farm shows from July.

Please see below for the list of events the RPA are still attending this summer:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| • 5–7 Jul | Kent |
| • 9–12 Jul | Great Yorkshire Show |
| • 17 Jul | Drifffield Show |
| • 30 Jul | NSA Sheep |
| • 13 Aug | Ripley Show |
| • 24 Aug | Wensleydale Show |
| • 26 Aug | Glendale Show |
| • 7 Sep | Keighley Show |
| • 11 Sep | UK Dairy Day |
| • 11–12 Sep | Westmorland County Show |
| • 21–22 Sep | Newbury Show |
| • 28 Sep | Fairford, Faringdon, Filkins and Burford Ploughing Championship and Country Show |
| • 2 Oct | The Dairy Show |
| • 12 Oct | Alwinton Show |
| • 1 Nov | Borderway Agri Expo |
| • 6 Nov | Northern Farming Conference |
| • 20–21 Nov | Midland Machinery Show |
| • 27–28 Nov | Croptec Show |

The RPA are encouraging show attendees to visit their stands to say hello and ask any questions you may have.

Don't forget that the RPA does have its own blog, available on [GOV.UK](#), where you can also access their podcast, which provides up-to-date info on developments with the RPA. You can listen to all the latest episodes on [Apple](#) and [Spotify](#), or through [Buzzsprout](#).



Stay up to date with us



Get the latest updates by following us on X (formerly Twitter)

Follow us on [@DefraFAS](https://twitter.com/DefraFAS) for up-to-the-minute updates on publications, events and industry information.



Subscribe to our free monthly newsletter

If you don't already receive our monthly FAS newsletter, please visit farmingadvice.service.org.uk and enter your email address into the newsletter sign-up box.

Alternatively, please email bookings@farmingadvice.service.org.uk with 'Register for newsletter' in the subject line.

In line with data protection regulations, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the UK Data Protection Act 2018, FAS has updated its privacy policy to explain how your data is kept safe.

To view the policy, please visit www.farmingadvice.service.org.uk/events/privacy/.